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VII. Some Attempts made to prove that Herbs
of the same Make or Class for the general-
lity, have the like Virtue and Tendency
to work the same Effects. In a Discourse made
before the Royal Society, by Mr. James Petiver
Apothecary, and Fellow of the said Society.

Having by some Persons been asked what Method
might be best proposed towards the *discovering* of
the *Vertues* of *Plants*, amongst others I thought this
might not prove an altogether unsuccessful conjecture,
Viz. That *Plants* of the same *Figure* or *Likeness*, have
for the generallity much the same *Vertues* and *Use*.
Especially if we consider, that the *Organs* or *Structure*
of all *Plants* of the same *Family* or *Class*, must have
much the same *Vessels* and *Ductus's* to consummate that
Regular formation, and consequently the *Juices* Circu-
lated and strained thro' them cannot be very *Heteroge-*
neous; and that as for the most part, the *Scent* and *Taste*
have great affinity, so of course their *Vertue* likewise
cannot be very *dissonant*.

1. As for Instance, the *Herbe Umbelliferae* or *Tribe* of
Umbelliferous Herbs. These the Learned Mr. Ray hath
accurately Treated of in the 9th. Book of his excel-
lent *History of Plants*, pag. 406. and his *Synopsis* p. 63.
and in his 2d. Edition, pag. 101. as hath Mr. Dale also
in his *Pharmacologia*, pag. 202.

It's the property of these *Herbs* to have the Position
of their *Flower-branches* to proceed from one Basis or
Center, which expand themselves into an *Umbel*, whose
Flowers consist of Five irregular or rather unequal, (that
is, differing in shape and bigness) *pentapetalose Leaves*,

from whence their *Seed* are produced, which are naked or double, or by their splitting seem so.

This *Genus* I generally observe to be endowed with a *Carminative* Taste and Smell, are powerful expellers of Wind, and are therefore good in all flatulent Diseases, and of great use in the Cholick, &c. To Instance a few for Example, as *Aniss*, *Caraway*, *Cummin*, *Angelica*, *Smallage*, *Parsley*, *Lovage*, &c.

Here is to be noted, that the Seed of Umbels are most used, as in all those just mentioned, and the Roots also of some are no less prevalent, *Viz.* the *Angelica*, *Fennel*, *Parsley* and *Smallage*, and the *Leaves* of some few, *Viz.* these last recited.

2. Let us now look into another Class, *Viz.* the *Plantæ Galeatæ* and *Verticillatae*, Raii *Hist. Plant.* lib. 11. pag. 508. *Synops.* 77. and *Ed.* 2. 122. The Medicinal ones of this Tribe are also Treated of in Mr. *Dales Manuductio ad materiam Medicam*, pag. 230. These are a Family of Plants which bear their Flowers in *Rundels* or *Whorles*, at more or less distances round the Stalk, whose *Monopetalose Flowers*, if we may so call them, being such at the bottom, being *Tubulose*, contrary to the last, and are generally divided into Five unequal Segments as the Umbels, but with this distinction, that the two greater *petala* or *Flower-leaves* in this Tribe are sometimes above, and other times below; whereas the others are constantly the same, that is always lye in the same place, being expanded on a flat or plain Surface: The *Flowers* of our *Verticillated* Plants from the different Position of their *Petala*, are therefore distinguish under the *Floræ Galeatæ seu Labiate*. The Calyx or Case to the lower, or *Tubulose* part of each Flower serves also for it's *Seed Vessel*, in the bottom of which is contained, in all I have yet observed, 4 Seeds set close together upon a Plain, which Nature lets fall out when ripe,

ripe, the Husk being always open, and commonly divided into Five Points, Adequating the Segments of each Flower.

Now whereas the greatest *Vertue* of the *Umbelliferous Tribe*, were specified to lye in the *Seed*, and next to them the *Roots*, there are few or none as I have yet observed in this *Genus* famous for any extraordinary *Vertues* or Effects in those parts, but the Sovereign balm of these chiefly consist in their *Leaves* and *Husks*, rather than the *Flowers*; which last, especially all *Authors* has hitherto given the preference to; as for *Example*, in the *Flowers* of *Rosemary*, *Lavender* and *Sage*, particularly the first, as the only part from which our best *Queen of Hungary's Water* is extracted. I will therefore take this occasion to give my Reasons, for preferring that part which by all others has been hitherto neglected and slighted, or if used, has been by accident only or casually by being contiguous to the *Flower*.

I would not be thought to propose this *Hypothesis* for Cheapness sake, for if my assertion holds good, as I doubt not to prove it, I fear they will quickly sell the *Husks* as dear as the *Flowers*, if they find a great vend or a frequent demand for them.

My Reasons for giving the preference to the *Husks* of this Tribe, before the *Flowers*, are, because I commonly observe the *Calyces* are the chiefest, if not the only part on which I find it's Viscous or Sulphureous Particles to adhere, this you may very easily perceive, not only by it's much stronger and penetrating smell, but by the Clamminess of this, far beyond the other parts, as is very apparent, particularly in the *Husks* of *Sage* and *Clary*, and if with Spirit of Wine you make a Distillation of these alone, you will find them much stronger then from a greater quantity of *Flowers* only, which being of finer and more Volatile parts, are only capable

of retaining what the vicinity of the stronger and thicker Texture, which the *Calyces* are composed of, and can without prejudice easily communicate to them.

I look upon the generality of this Tribe, to be a degree Warmer than the last, and their Heat consequently to approach nearer to the *Aromatae* or Spices, then the *Carminatives*, and the Effects therefore to be more peculiarly appropriated to such Nervous Diseases, as are more intense, and the *Umbelliferæ* cannot so quickly reach, *Viz. Apolexies, Epilepsies, Palsies, &c.* in which cases our *Lavender, Rosemary, Sage, Stachas*, and some others, are Simples which all our antient *Physitians* (in these stubborn Diseases) have very much applauded. Yet at the same time we must not forget the many Celebrated Effects that are owing to some others of this Family, as *Mint, Bawm, Pennyroyal, Savory, Time, Hyssop, Marjoram, Basill, Origanum, Dittanny of Creet, Marum* or common *Mastick-time*, with *Marum Syriacum* and some other, no less Noble Herbs of this Family, that I have lately received both from the *East* and *West-Indies*, which I have also Experienc'd in some Cases with very good success.

3. We proceed next to those herbs which have a *Tetrapetalose Regular Flower*, (by *Regular* I mean, such as have Four equal *petala* in each Flower), these Mr. *Ray* Treats of in his Sixteenth Book of his *History of Plants*, and in his *Synopsis Stirpium Britannicarum* pag. 108. and in his *Second Edition*, p. 164. under the Title of *Herbe Flore Tetrapetalo uniformi* and by Mr. *Dale* in his *Pharmacologia*, under the same Character pag. 292. these in Relation to their Seed-Vessels, are sub-divided under two Heads. *Viz. Siliquosæ vel Capsulæ*, being such as have their Seeds contained in long or short receptacles as *Pods* or *Capsules*.

The known Herbs of this *Genus* that are most commonly used in *Physick*, are the following, *Viz.* The *Sinapi*, *Raphanus*, *Eruca*, *Alliaria*, *Paronychia* or *Whitlow grass*, *Sophia Chyrurgorum*, *Erysimum*, *Nasturtium*, *Cochleariae utriusq*; with some others.

The most Essential Virtue and use of the Herbs of this *Class* I observe are more particularly in the Leaves and Seed, and next them the Roots, and if any parts are slighted, it's the *Flowers* and *Podds*.

The *Leaves* are more particularly used in the *Water* and *Garden Cresses*, *Sea* and *Garden Scurvy-grass*, *Hedge-Mustard*, *Iberis*, or *Sciatica Cresses*, *Lepidium seu Piperitis Officinarum*, *Cardamine*, *Bursa pastoris*, &c. To which may be added our *Cabbage*, *Coleworts*, *Savvys*, *Sprouts*, &c. which are of this Tribe also; and tho' they are of no great Reputation in *Physick*, yet for some Ages past they have got no small esteem in the *Kitchen*.

Others of this *Family* that are more peculiarly eminent for the *Virtue* contained in their *Seed*, are the Common *Mustard* and *Rape*, the *Thlaspi* *Dioscoridis* or *Treacle Mustard*, the *Eruca* or *Rocket*, and *Sophia Chyrurgorum* or *Flixweed*, the Seed of which last I am informed, by a very Worthy Member of this Society, hath for some Years past been used by several People in the *North of England*, for the *Stone* and *Gravel* with with very good success. The like hint, if I mistake not, Signior *Paul Boccone* gives us in his late *Italian Book*, Intitled *Museo di Fisica*.

We come now to the *Roots*, Two or Three of which have gained no small repute, as well in *Diet* as *Physick*, *Viz.* The *Radishes*, both *Garden* and *Spanish*, (which is the large *Black-rooted*;) as also the *Wild* or *Horse Radish*, and to these the round and long Rooted *Turnep* must be added.

Most of this *Tribe* I find, tho' they are *not* like the two last, *viz.* the Umbelliferæ and Verticillatae, yet they exert their power in a much different manner, to wit, by a *Diuretick volatile Salt*, and are found most prevalent and effectual in *Chronick Diseases*, as the *Scurvy*, *Dropfy*, *Gout*, *Jaundice*, and other ill habits of the Body, where the *Blood* is vitiated, rather in it's Particles, than irregular Motion, carrying off it's imparity by a *Diuretick Diuresis* or discharge of the offending Heterogeneos Salts therein contained, and consequently by purification, disposing of it to a better, or more sane disposition.

Whether these conjectures agree with the opinion of some *Practitioners of Physick*, I know not, but I am certain the effects of many of these *Herbs*, as *Water-Cresses*, *Garden* and *Sea Scurvy-grass*, with *Mustard seed*, and *Garden* and *Horse Radish*, which are all of this *Family*, are by most, if not all *Physitians*, as well Antient as Mordern, allowed to be extraordinary *Diureticks* and *Anti-scorbuticks*.

Something more might be said on these *Heads*, and some other *Classes*, which at another time I shall endeavour to illustrate, if what I have here already humbly offered, may be thought Worthy the acceptance of so *Illustrious* and *Learned* a Society

May the 10th.

1699.